

**Testimony of Grant Zimmerman  
Before the Appropriations Committee  
IN OPPOSITION TO:  
HB 5044**

**An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**

**February 18, 2016**

**Grant Zimmerman, West Hartford, Connecticut**

Good evening Senator Bye and Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Grant Zimmerman and I am testifying in opposition to HB 5044: An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017.

Please do not make any cuts to Chrysalis. Chrysalis has quite literally saved my life. Several years ago, I was going through deep mental and emotional pain. I had no friends and seemed incapable of making any productive socialization. Very close to suicide, I decided in a last ditch effort to attend one of the Chrysalis social events. There I met another person going through a hard time who turned out to be the best friend I ever had. I found new meaning in life and had a new lease on life. My friend encouraged me to branch out in any way I could and I eventually found more friends, including my first serious girlfriend. Recently he also encouraged me to find work and I am now in the process of looking for work. Chrysalis facilitated this meeting and without Chrysalis I strongly believe I wouldn't be here today. Furthermore, Chrysalis is great with case management. They've been very helpful for myself and others in pursuing volunteer or paid work.

Please do not make any cuts to assisted living. Assisted living has helped me at a very precarious time in my life with essential skills to help me live on my own.

Please do not make cuts to the Regional Mental Health Boards. These are the foundation that the mental health care system relies upon, and they also function to maintain, repair and improvise to fix any damage that may be done. To me and many others, this seems like a poorly disguised effort to dismantle and eliminate the little that is left of the mental health care system.

Last year, after surviving a fall that left me unable to walk for months and a subsequent infection, I experienced first-hand the what the overloaded, understaffed hospital and nursing homes for the mentally ill have to deal with. The situation is very bad. Please don't make it any worse.

Recently, hundreds of millions of dollars have been taken from the middle class and those living in poverty in the form of higher taxes and bigger spending cuts. And it has been given to powerful and wealthy corporations and their CEOs. Is it possible to balance the budget by diverting some of this corporate welfare? If the motivation for these payments is to create jobs, why are bills being proposed to outsource many state jobs?

These unending attacks on funding have also adversely affected the mentally ill population. Creating fear and uncertainty about our lives and what could happen to the essential services that our lives hinge on.